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ROSSLYN

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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ROSSLYN 1908

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ROSSLYN

ARLINGTON COUNTY'S NEW URBAN COMPLEX

A phenomenal change has been achieved since 1962 in Rosslyn, an unincorporated part of Arlington County located at the core of fast growing Metropolitan Washington.

Interstate Highway 66 sliced off 50 acres of marginally used commercial and wholesale land between Rosslyn and the Potomac River, presenting a unique opportunity for local government and private enterprise to create an unequalled working and living environment.

The prime location of Rosslyn, at the Virginia end of Key Bridge, made it an ideal and attractive location for office, motel, and apartment redevelopment.

Rosslyn expresses the spirited approach which Arlington County has taken to meet the challenge of urban redevelopment through private enterprise.

Arlington created a new "site plan" zoning procedure and approved circulation plans to help achieve the best building complex. Under the new procedure, incentives were offered by the County government to encourage: site consolidation; free-standing buildings; consideration of the inter-relationship of buildings and public facilities; sound urban design; ample off-street parking; and a variety of connected pedestrian plazas to help achieve free-flow circulation.

Through the enthusiastic and effective response of land owners and builders, Arlington's Rosslyn is becoming a new focal point of the Metropolitan area, a ". . . towering showplace in suburban Washington . . ." as described in the February, 1965 issue of *Nation's Business*.

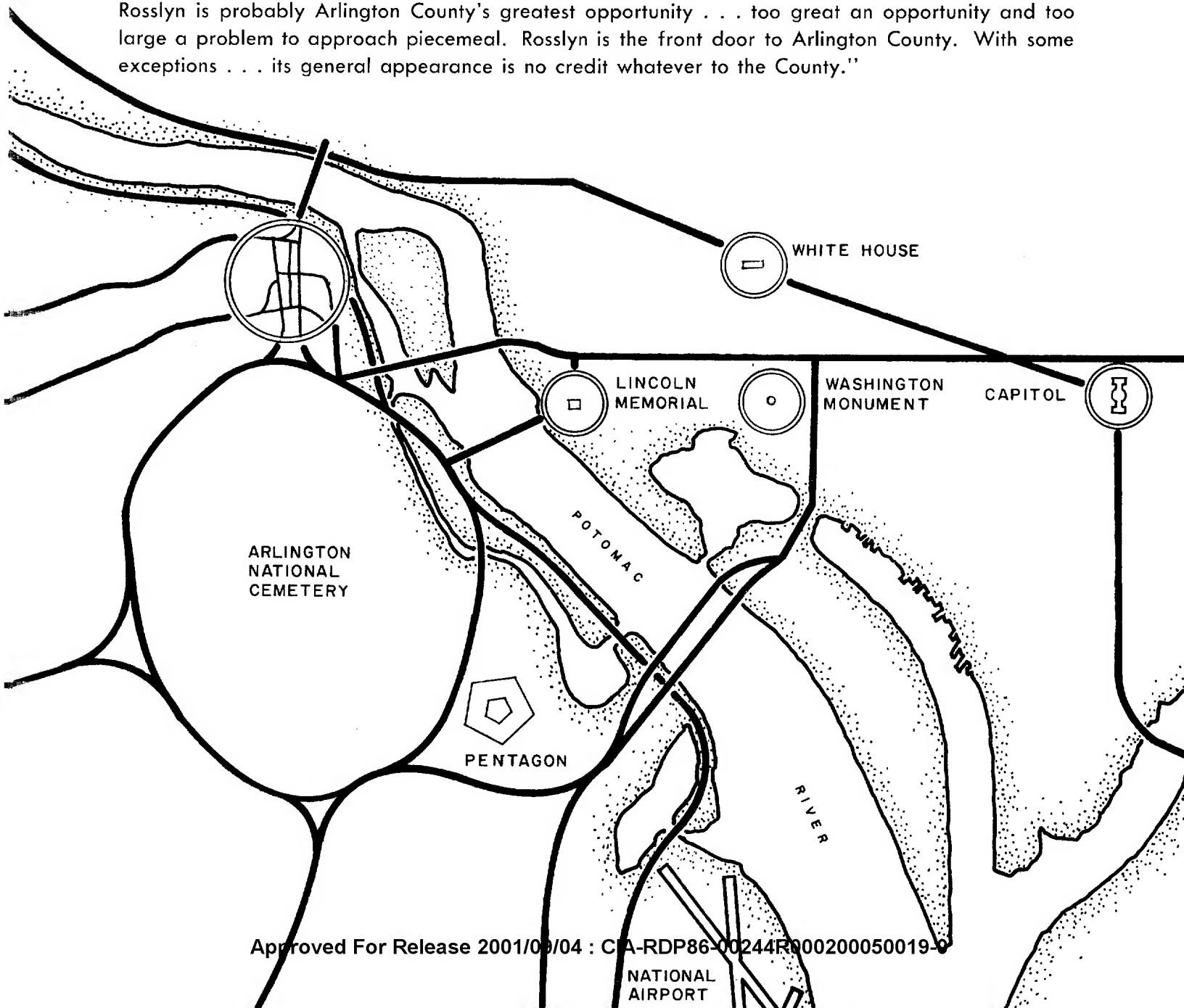
This report summarizes Arlington's plans for, and progress in, the redevelopment of Rosslyn as an exciting, attractive place for people to work and live.

BACKGROUND

Until the 1800's, Rosslyn had been farmland. Because of its location, it emerged as a transportation focal point. The C. & O. Canal connected the "West" with the Nation's Capital and crossed over the Potomac at Rosslyn.

By 1900, Rosslyn had become a notorious gambling and "entertainment" area. Later, wholesale and storage yard activities predominated, though marginal commercial uses were still apparent.

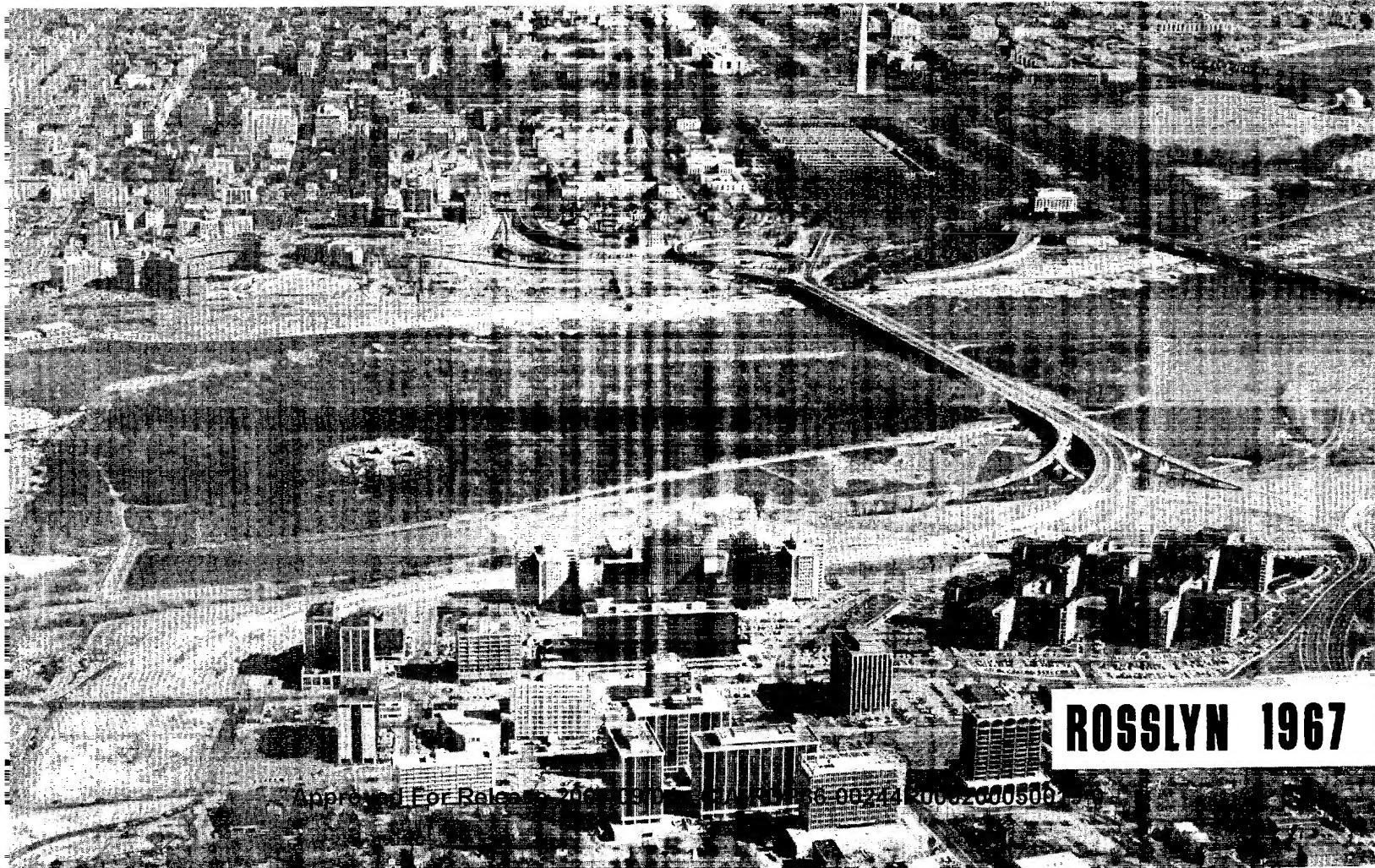
In 1957, Rosslyn was described in an Office of Planning report as: ". . . used for open storage of building materials and automotive parts. Many . . . buildings . . . are substandard in quality. Rosslyn is probably Arlington County's greatest opportunity . . . too great an opportunity and too large a problem to approach piecemeal. Rosslyn is the front door to Arlington County. With some exceptions . . . its general appearance is no credit whatever to the County."



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ROSSLYN 1962



ROSSLYN 1967

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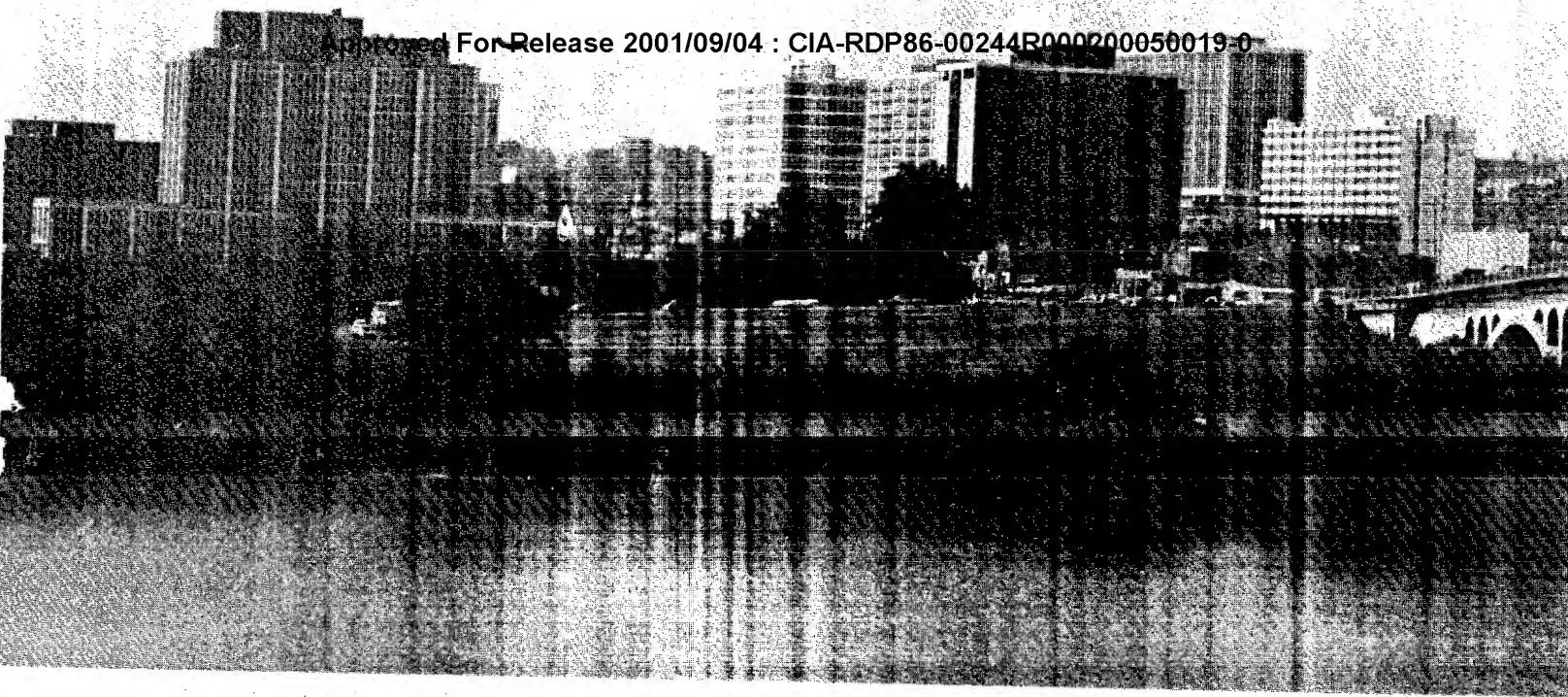
Continued Growth

The greatest assurance of continued growth will result from private and public construction of pedestrian and vehicular circulation improvements.

Growing traffic congestion in Rosslyn is readily apparent. The additional tax yield from the Rosslyn area will more than offset revenue needed to retire bonds for public improvements in Rosslyn.

The citizens of Arlington have the opportunity to make firm the County's commitment to the Rosslyn plan through bond issues for public improvements. With continued public support, Rosslyn will become an unparalleled example of cooperative urban rebuilding.





THE PLAN CUBE

Rosslyn commands a unique setting on a gently rising slope above the Potomac River.

Rosslyn is defined by the Potomac River on the north and east; Arlington National Cemetery, the Marine Corps War (Iwo Jima) Memorial and Arlington Boulevard to the south; and Arlington's forested residential bluff to the west.

The extent of underground parking is established by a shelf of rock two to three stories below the surface. An aircraft glide path along the Potomac establishes a building height of about twelve stories. Rosslyn buildings step up a gentle slope offering the top floors of all buildings an unobstructed view of the Washington skyline.

The Rosslyn study area encompasses a total of 130 acres. With land required for peripheral highways and 22 acres previously developed, the remaining redevelopment area consists of some 50 acres.

ACCESS

Access to Rosslyn is a key to its potential. Bounded by U. S. Highways 29—211 and 50, by new Interstate 66, and by the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Rosslyn offers unmatched access to Washington's regional employment and transportation centers. Rosslyn, by normal daytime driving, is within two to ten minutes of National Airport, the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency, the White House, the Federal Triangle, the Capitol and related government and private offices.

CRITERIA FOR REBUILDING

In 1961, the Arlington County Board, recognizing Rosslyn's problems and potential, adopted a land use plan and a "site plan" procedure which converted conventionally negative zoning into a positive recognition of valid community objectives. Under a site plan approval zoning classification, a site may be developed to a fixed height and density without County Board review or, if appropriate, to greater height and density if a "site plan" is submitted to the County Board for approval.

By approved site plans, the County Board permits better buildings which may make more intensive use of the land in return for contributions to land use and circulation requirements. Private interests are encouraged therefore to consolidate small parcels of land into more reasonable building sites by incentives rather than condemnation.

In order to foster sound development of Rosslyn through the site plan approval procedure, the Arlington County Planning Commission recommended criteria for development which includes:

- buildings up to twelve stories, free-standing in character, with ample light, air, and open space,
- adequate on-site underground parking,
- underground utility wires,
- signs limited to identification and direction,
- coordination of building relationships,
- free-flowing vehicular circulation,
- pedestrian walkways connecting private, landscaped plazas.

Under criteria adopted in ordinance form and put into effect by approved site plans through County Board action, approximately 31,000 people will work in Rosslyn when the area is totally developed. Of these, approximately 26,500 would be at work on any given day. About 2% could be expected to walk to work from nearby areas, while about 30% of peak hour arrivals would be by transit and some 60% would drive or be delivered by automobiles.

Analysis of a comparable traffic situation was clearly warranted. A study of the Pentagon, with nearly comparable numbers of people and traffic volumes, confirmed criteria for free-flow circulation and pedestrian bridges. Anticipated traffic helped design the circulation plan. Computer analysis verified the staff's solution.

CIRCULATION

In December, 1963, the Rosslyn traffic circulation plan was adopted by the County Board. The plan contains such features as adequate rights-of-way, separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, bus stops off of travel lanes, no left turn movements through on-coming traffic, and continuous turning movements, where possible.

AUTOMOBILES

The Circulation Plan consists of an internal loop to serve virtually every building site, with one east-west and two north-south arteries connecting the system with the surrounding highways. Grade separations, one-way traffic, and street widths of from four to seven lanes are proposed. The total system was designed with a close tolerance, fixing the general development pattern while maintaining flexibility for individual site development.

TRANSIT

Over 825 buses a day presently go into or through Rosslyn. As the daytime working population approaches 31,000 people, the number of buses will greatly increase. These buses will disrupt traffic flow during the peak hours if they load and discharge in the travel lanes. The plan proposes bus turnouts and a central terminal facility large enough to accommodate the expected volumes.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority plans a subway to serve Rosslyn by about 1972, with initial service from downtown Washington, and later provision for transit lines radiating throughout the Metropolitan area. The bus and subway terminals should be co-ordinated.

PEDESTRIANS

The Circulation Plan proposes a complete separation or "channelization" of pedestrian traffic through a series of raised plazas and pedestrian bridges. With such a system, the pedestrian will be provided greater comfort, safety, and convenience than with a street level pedestrian movement. Equally important, however, will be the increased efficiency and safety afforded by the total circulation system. Conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic at peak hours would greatly impede the efficiency and reduce the safety of traffic flow. In addition, land is not available in Rosslyn for the additional traffic lanes which would be made necessary by a conflict of these traffic systems.

PEDESTRIAN PLAN

The pedestrian circulation plan is designed around buildings set on private plazas. The plazas are to be connected by pedestrian bridges which are generally oriented along north-south and east-west axes, crossing at a central square.

The Central Square is designed to be a nucleus of activity with convenience shops anticipated at the pedestrian level. At the street level, a bus-subway terminal would encourage concentration of all transit activity. Buses will be encouraged to stop only at the Central Square. A number of buses are, however, expected to stop at various points throughout Rosslyn, leaving passengers closer to their destinations. For this reason, and anticipating that some of the pedestrian bridges may be closed in the evening, auxiliary bus stops and turn-out lanes will be maintained.

Bus lanes at the terminal would be capable of handling up to 200 buses an hour. Taxi and other pick-up and delivery service would occur on the right-of-way of North Moore Street which should be closed to through traffic but would pass emergency and service vehicles.

From the street level, moving stairs or ramps are planned to carry pedestrians up to the pedestrian plaza level. This level should be landscaped and well appointed with street furniture. Larger shops and restaurants should also be anticipated near this pedestrian plaza.

All site plans approved by the County Board have incorporated private plazas similar to those shown on the plan.



GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rosslyn is a principle gateway to Arlington. The Key Bridge approach across the Potomac River is becoming attractive and inviting. Architecturally distinctive buildings at this approach should act as a visual focus, marking an entrance to Arlington and using the new skyline of Rosslyn as a background. Outstanding restaurants could be incorporated in such buildings, adjacent to an ideal site for a heliport between North Lynn Street and North Fort Myer Drive. Facilities within such buildings should complement and serve the Central Square, office buildings and adjacent motels. The ultimate purpose of a plan for Rosslyn is to provide an attractive environment, taking advantage of those elements which establish excellence: the walking surfaces, ramps, steps, walls, fountains, lighting, sculpture, benches, telephone booths, and the trees and shrubs which retain a contact with nature. All are important, and great care should be exercised in their design and location.

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Top

NORMANDY HOUSE
(Completed)
LONDON HOUSE

92 unit luxury apartments

Left

ROSSLYN BUILDING
Executive office building
(Utility wires buried)

Bottom

HOLIDAY INN
178 unit high-rise motel



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POTENTIAL

- 40 building sites for office and apartment buildings,
- 5 million square feet of executive office space,
- 14 thousand off-street parking spaces, mostly underground,
- 31 thousand employees (more than the Pentagon),
- 19 hundred luxury apartment units,
- 190 million dollars of real value,
- The Washington area's newest and most outstanding office complex.

From February 1962 to October 1967

PROGRESS

- Adopted development criteria, zoning classifications and circulation plans,
- 21 office buildings are completed or under construction (2,646,000 sq. ft.),
- 1 Holiday Inn Motel has been completed (178 units),
- 2 luxury apartments have been completed (184 units),
- Tower addition to Marriott Motel has been approved (203 units),
- 1 additional office building has been approved (177,000 sq. ft.),
- 114 million dollars of real value approved by site plan.

ARLINGTON'S URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Arlington found, in its Rosslyn area, an ideally located problem area which could be economically redeveloped to meet the high demand for new office space within the limits of established public policy. The results have been dramatic.

The County Government, principally through the tool of zoning, opened the development of marginal commercial and storage lands to a much more intensive and attractive use.

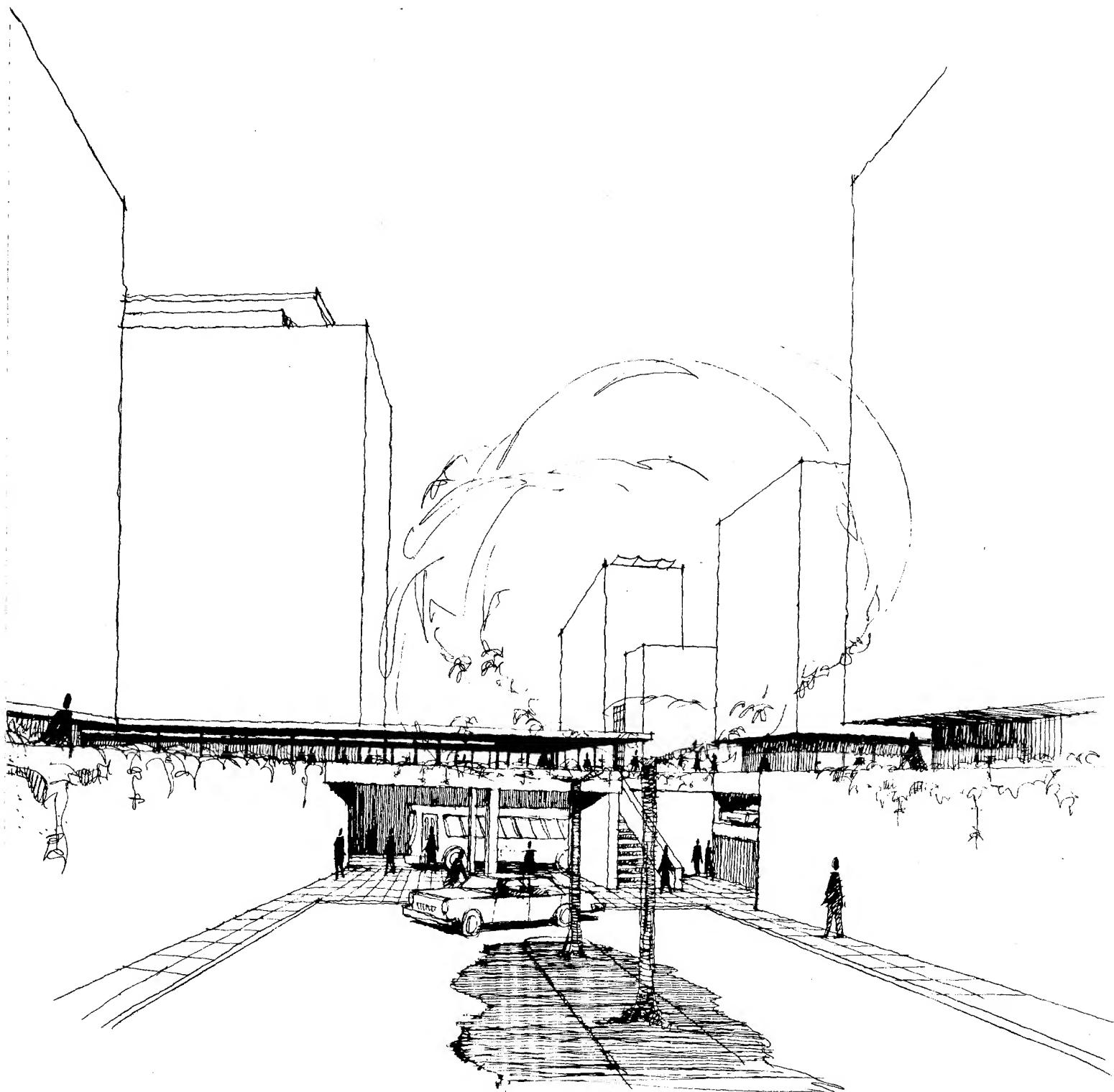
In Rosslyn, zoning incentives, which offered a more intensive use and a high return, were aided by interstate highway clearance of 50 acres of poorly used properties. Land values accelerated when it was realized that 50 acres of marginal commercial property was the only developable land remaining. In a word, the Rosslyn redevelopment potential was unique.

Between 1962 and 1967 the County Board approved site plans for more than 60% of the land suitable for development in Rosslyn.

Detailed plans have been drawn for the construction of the first pedestrian bridge, to be financed by the owners of abutting buildings. A large amount of the land needed for the proposed circulation system has been given in easements to the County under the site plan approval procedure.

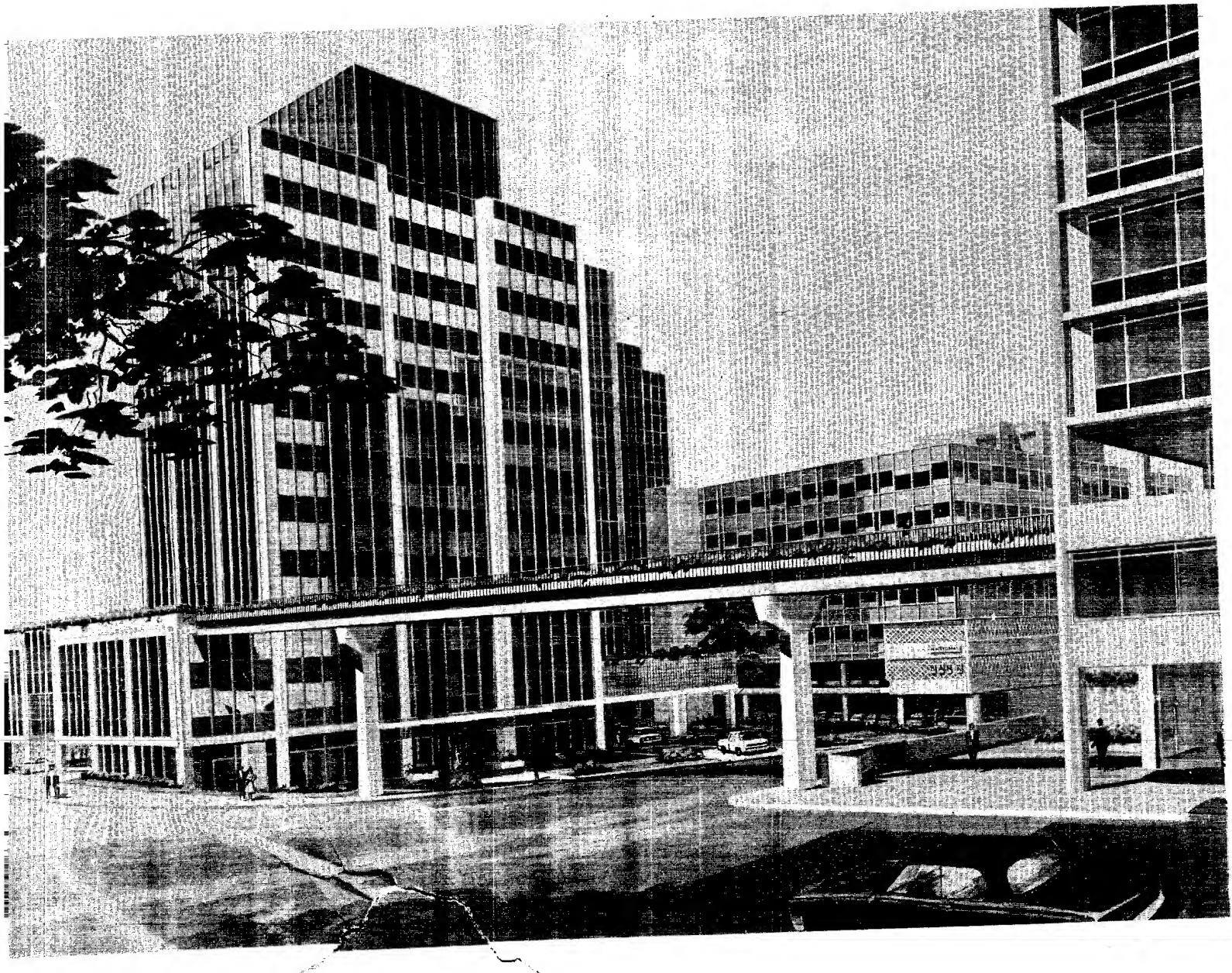
The lesson to be learned from Rosslyn is to seek advantages inherent in a problem. Local government can capitalize on these advantages and then bring every applicable tool to bear on attaining a cooperative working relationship between those who will test these advantages.

In Arlington's case there has been general public support for a cooperative effort. The County Board created zoning incentives, thus offering the builder economic feasibility, and the results so far have been astonishing.



THE CENTRAL SQUARE
From Wilson Boulevard at North Moore Street

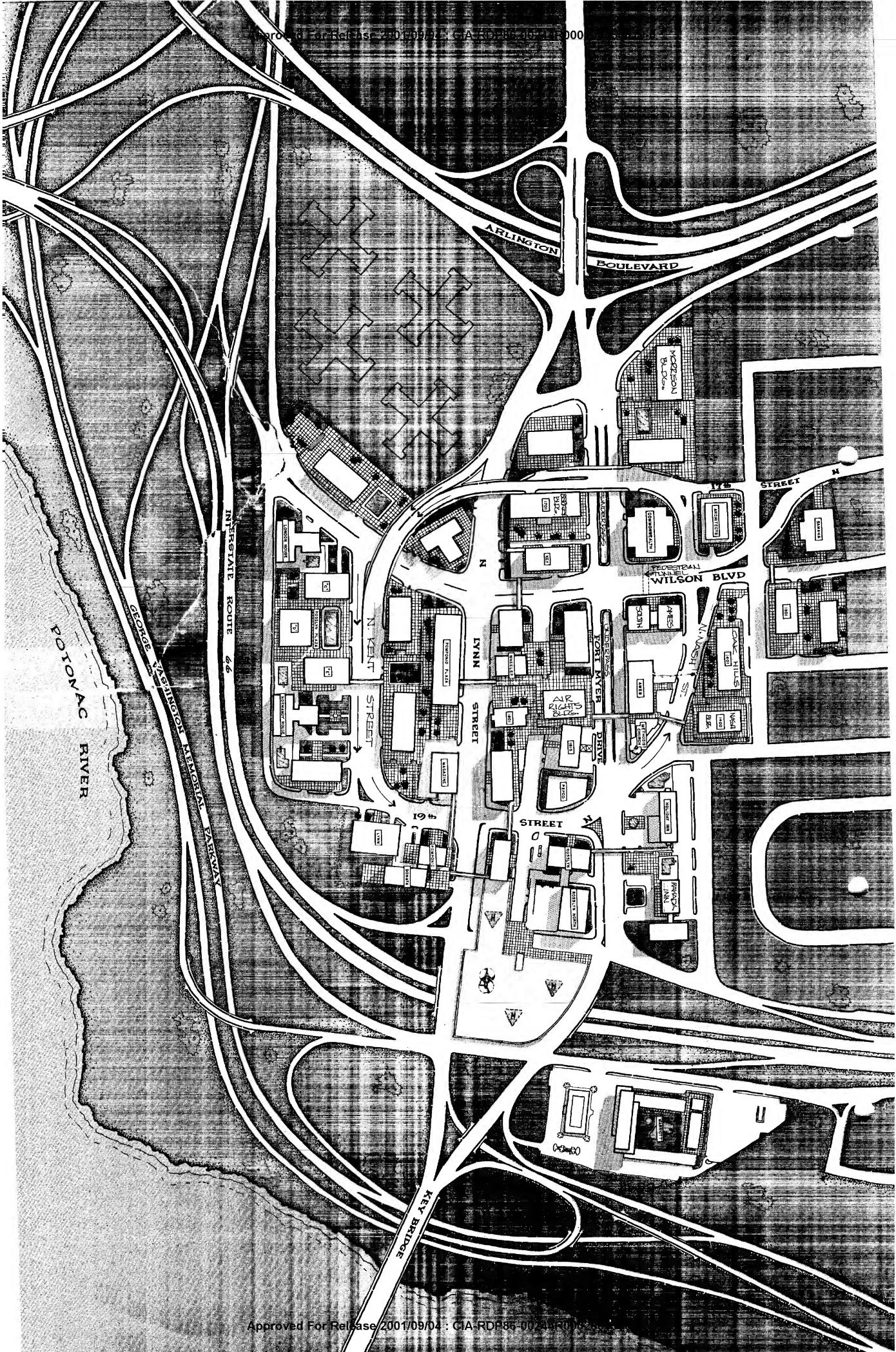
Pettersson

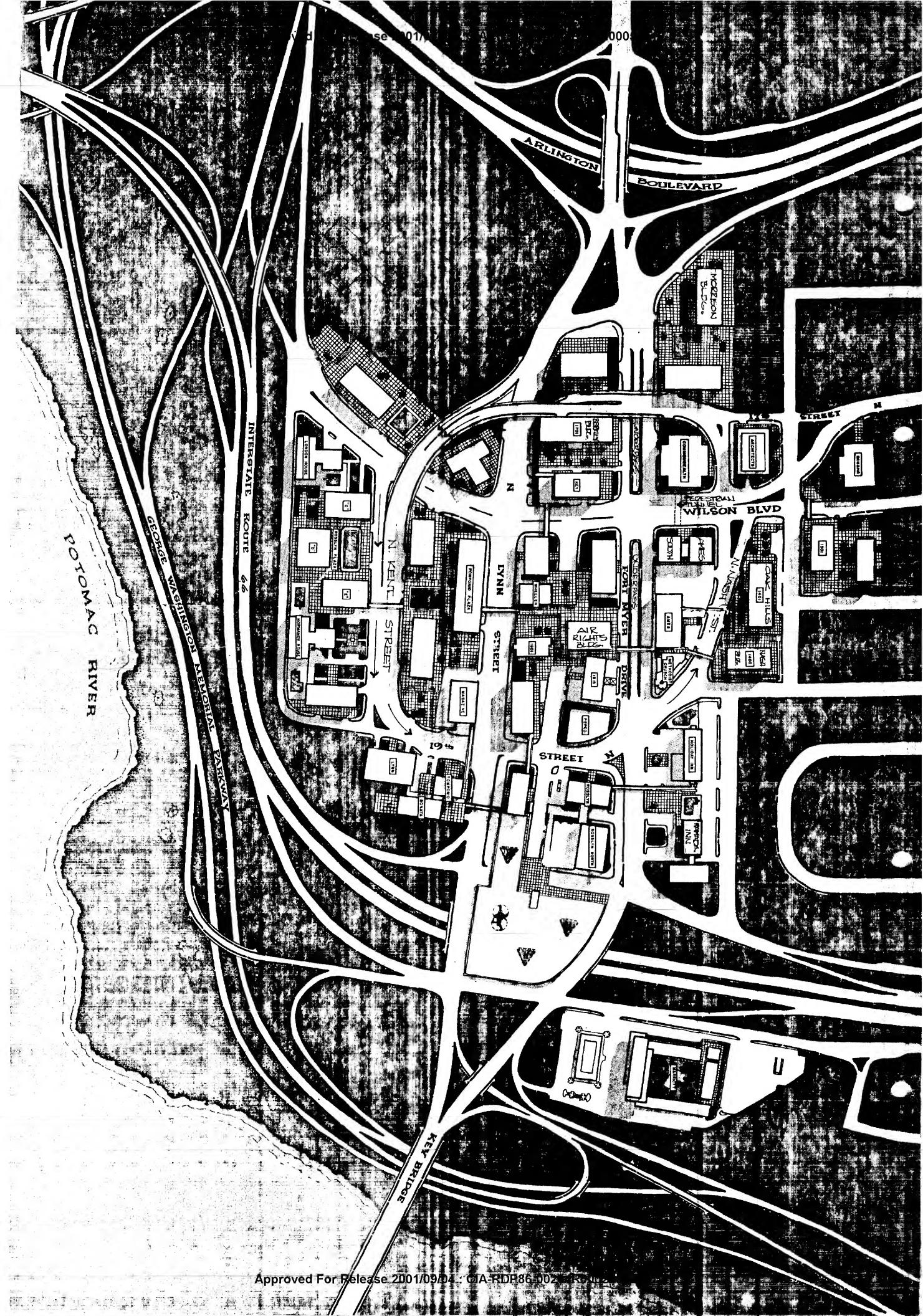


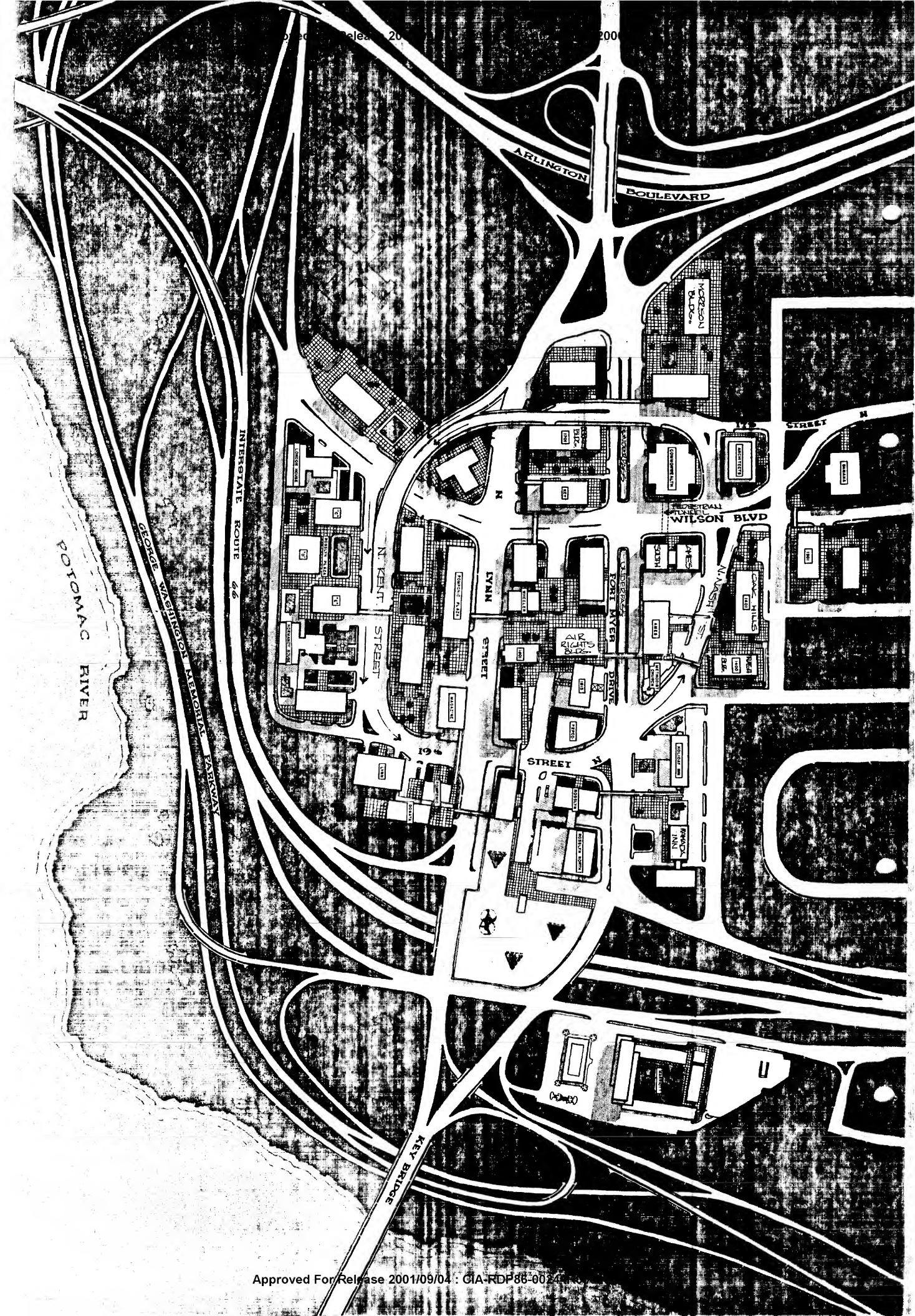
~~PEDESTRIAN~~ BRIDGES

A prototype pedestrian bridge for the Rosslyn area has been designed. The bridge is a long span structure designed to be compatible with existing and proposed development. Lighting fixtures are incorporated within planter-box bases. The bridges should be sufficiently strong to permit their future covering.

General agreement concerning the responsibility for pedestrian bridges has been achieved by the County Board and builders through the site plan approval procedure.











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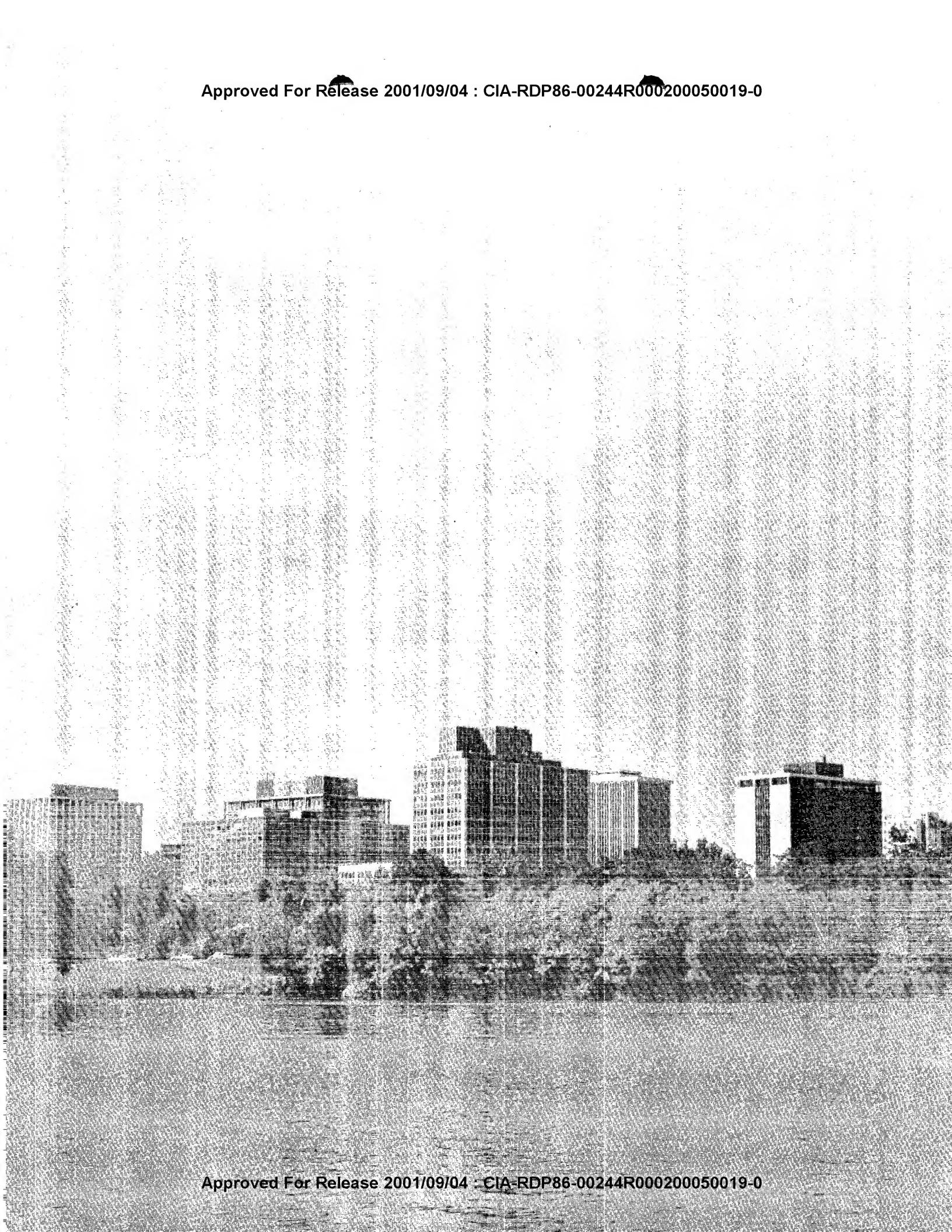
Officer C. E. Taylor, Arlington County Police Department

Air Photos

Top Air Survey Corporation

Bottom Blue Ridge Aerial Surveys

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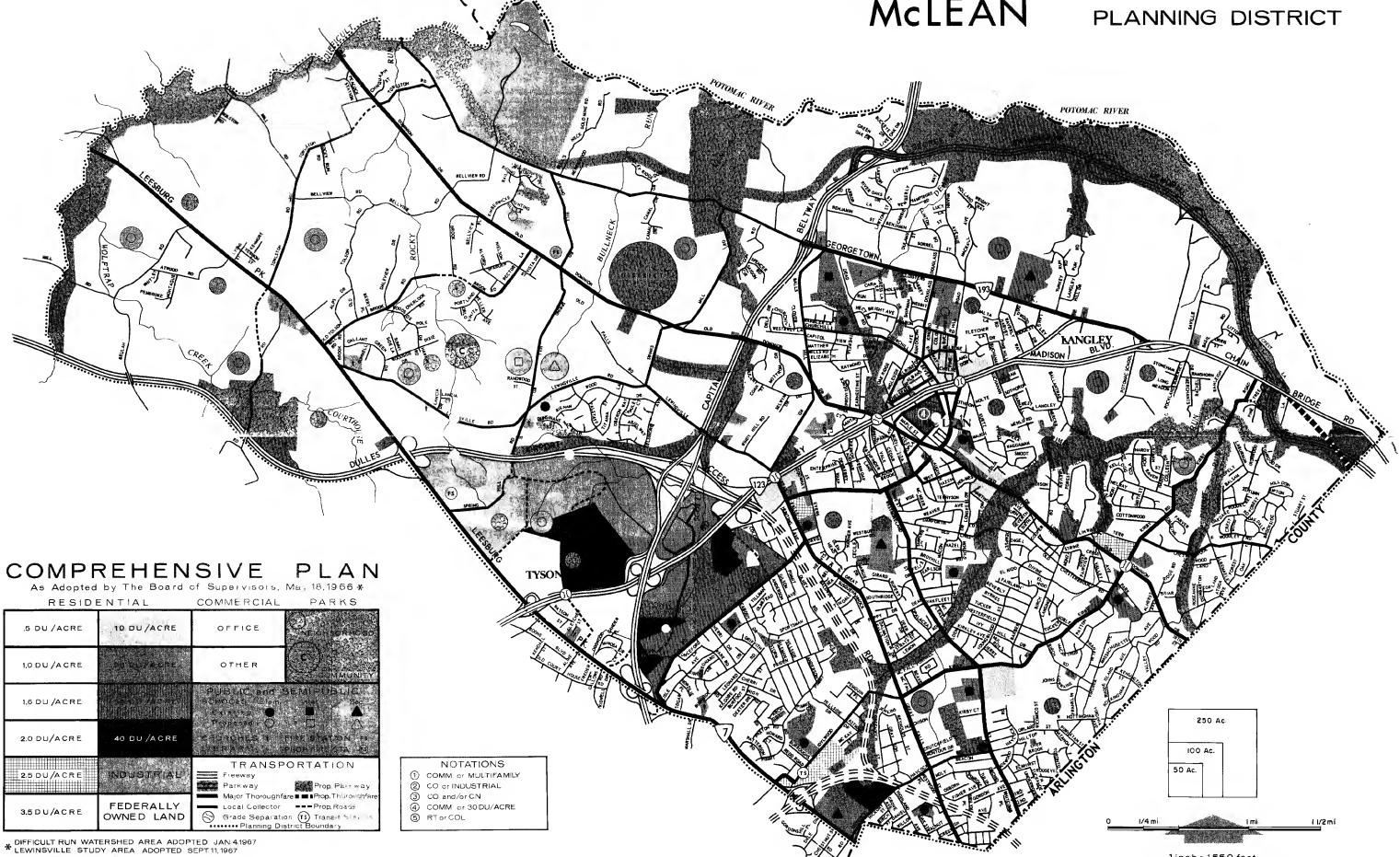


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McLEAN

PLANNING DISTRICT



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PREPARED BY THE DIVISION OF PLANNING, FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

